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CHAPTER 16

National Narratives and the Invention of Ethnic Identities: Revisiting Cultural Memory and the Decolonized State in Morocco

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Educational systems are key to our understanding of the ways in which national identities are created, sustained and reproduced. When the project of nation building is closely associated or appears simultaneously with processes of modernization, state institutions play a crucial role in spreading national ideologies and creating shared cultures (Gellner, 2006). In the nineteenth century, European countries used divide-and-conquer politics overseas in order to sustain their colonizing power. In this chapter, I scrutinize the lasting effects of such policies on the organization of ethnic and cultural differences within the so-called decolonized nation-state. I will primarily approach the issue by looking into the 'cultivation of culture' (Leersen, 2006) that accompanies projects of nation building.

As Anderson (1991) argued, several modern institutions preoccupied with the classification of individuals and groups (such as the museum, the demographic census and the geographical map) were invented at a time when European expansionism was at its height. These modern institutions appeared simultaneously with the building of nation-states in Europe (Megill, 2011). Modern academic disciplines such as geography, historiography and especially ethnography developed during the nineteenth century as well as part of the colonial and imperial project (Stoler & Cooper, 1997). European nation-states introduced the system of standardized education in their colonies as a way to supersede local and regional loyalties. Education supported and sustained

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moral citizenship and loyalty on a larger scale: that of the nation (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 2006). History education in particular caters to this need and provides historical depth and understanding to national subjects' loyalty to the state, as it defines who counts as a citizen of the state and what it means to belong to a nation.

This chapter explores the ways in which the national narratives of supposedly decolonized societies are constructed. It focuses on North African countries that have previously been colonized by France and deals with the production of national narratives in the context of historiography and history education.

Recent developments in the Maghreb known to us as the 'Arab Spring' have put the construction of new national narratives high on the region's political agenda. Over the past few decades, policymakers and socio-cultural activists have been preoccupied with national identity (Muslim, Arab and Berber) and ties with France. To what extent are those 'new' national narratives in Morocco truly 'decolonized'?

I will henceforth focus on the persistence of the so-called 'Berber issue' in national historical culture, historiography and history education in particular. The French are known to have made an artificial distinction between Arabs and Berbers during colonial times, evaluating the Berbers on more positive terms. After independence in 1956, when Morocco was defined as an Arab and Muslim country, the Berbers—their language, culture and heritage—were marginalized. This narrative has been contested in recent years. Throughout the twentieth century, Berber identity has been subject to an intricate power dynamic which, until this day, impinges upon modes of meaning making in national historical culture. Actors in this process tend to claim a fixed location for the Berbers and the Arabs in Moroccan history. Berber culture is presented as static, fixed and unified and thus is set off against Arab and Islamic culture. The history of the Moroccan nation-state was reduced to the history of the monarchy. Most historiographers focused on writing a history of the nation that amounted to a history of the anti-colonial nationalist movement (Gilson Miller, 2014).

This chapter in particular explores the tension between regional and local Berber identities on the one hand and the Arab and Islamic identity of the Moroccan nation-state on the other. It does so by focusing on the historical narrative that has been taught in Moroccan schools from independence in 1956 onwards. Recently, this narrative has been adapted to fit a new multiculturalist ideology. From the early 2000s onwards, ethnic and religious minorities have increasingly been included in national historical culture. More than half a century after independence from its former colonizers, states such as Morocco and Algeria continue to grapple with their respective legacies of colonization, especially within the fields of national historiography and history education. In this chapter, I therefore scrutinize the historical process of decolonization and the re-invention of ethnic identities in the Maghreb.

Inventing Ethnic Identities in the Colonial Maghreb

The colonizing regimes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have often all too quickly been represented as monolithic blocs of power that envisioned all colonized subjects as inferiors. This thesis has been countered many times over, resulting in the ruling academic opinion that colonizer-colonized relations were not always straightforward. Moreover, it has been suggested that colonizing regimes played out internal cultural differences in order to categorize their subjects and organize daily life in the colony (Stoler & Cooper, 1997). The way in which colonial administrators and scholars thought about culture and 'race' were, however, far more ambiguous and ambivalent (Young, 1995). For instance, in French colonial discourse on Morocco and Algeria, 'Arabs' and 'Berbers' were at some point not merely seen as distinct cultural and ethnic 'groups'. The difference was also objectified (Hammoudi, 1997; Laroui, 2011). French ethnologists and administrative staff re-interpreted existing social relations and political structures and henceforth obstructed a more lifelike representation of Moroccan society.

In the pre-colonial era, the transmission of *baraka* (religious blessing) from the sultan through religious brotherhoods and patron saints proved of particular importance in maintaining a balance of power. A division between secular and religious power probably had a hand in the way in which the French administrators conceived of local power. The sultan's empire was thought of as precarious. Precisely because he was only widely recognized as a religious leader, the French were convinced his position had withheld Morocco from becoming a 'true nation' (Hammoudi, 1997).

The intertwinement of colonial policies and human sciences, and ethnographic practice in particular, was thoroughly acknowledged by Talal Asad in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter,* published in Asad, 1973. In *Orientalism* (Said, 1978) and *Orientalism Reconsidered* (Said, 1985), Edward Said argued that the context within which our historical, ethnographic and geographical knowledge was produced was in fact a violent one. Said poignantly stressed the bond between representation on the one hand and knowledge production on the other: the ties between Western ethnocentrism and a Western epistemic order (see discussion in Young, 2004: 165–168).

This evidently also holds true for French colonialism in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and the French doctrine of assimilation that came to dominate the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The French viewed their acquisitions abroad as full-fledged French regions and extensions of the French Republic. Assimilation of local populations was seen as the key to civilization. Inspired by these ideas of assimilation and regionalism, French intellectuals and policymakers envisioned North Africa as a region naturally belonging to France. The concept of assimilation entailed the belief that all humans were inherently equal and that this could be achieved through education. Hence, French ethnologists developed the so-called 'Berber canon' in which the Berbers were described as more civilized and secularized than the Arabs.

Though often linked to French Enlightenment philosophy, the doctrine of assimilation was broadly held in the European continent from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Together with the concept of regionalism, it underscored much of the political ideas during the French Third Republic: native elites could be, and were as a matter of fact, assimilated into colonial administrations (Betts, 2005). In both France and Spain, debates on how to administer colonial subjects and how to locate the colonies in homeland politics were tied to debates on national identity (Martin-Marquez, 2008; Silverstein, 2002). When the French acquired Morocco, their ideologies had already been put to the test in Algeria, Africa and in overseas colonies.

A sociology or 'vulgate' (Burke, 2007) of Islam, Arabs and Berbers took shape in between the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt and the independence of Algeria in 1962. The 'colonial archive' on Moroccan populations was compiled between 1880 and 1930 and counts among the largest and most impressive of all colonial archives. It was also greatly influenced by ethnographic knowledge produced earlier on in Algeria, where racism was rampant (Lorcin, 1995). Whereas Algeria was home to a culturally diverse and linguistically plural society of Arabs, Berbers, Jews, a minority of blacks and Andalusians (the descendants from exiled Moors), the French narrowed these 'groups' down to just two: Algerian Arabs and Algerian Berbers. The binary and dichotomous imagery created was developed into a myth throughout the years of French domination of Algeria. Lorcin (1995) speaks of a myth not so much because the French differentiated between Arabs and Berbers as such but because the imagery gave way to a view that the Arabs were inferior to the Berbers and that the Berbers were superior to the Arabs. If the French wanted this imagery to be upheld through time, they needed geographical, historical and ethnological sources to document it.

Memory and (de)colonization in the Maghreb

Political and military needs were answered with claims that Berbers inhabited mountainous areas and Arabs the plains. Berbers were seen as sedentary peoples, Arabs as nomads. Religion was regarded an Arab prerogative, and the Berbers were pictured as only superficially islamicized but islamicized nevertheless. French missionaries were out to convert the Berbers to Christianity, much to the discontent of the colonial administration out of fear it would encourage Islamic sentiments overall. Islam remained an obstacle and problem the French never came to solve (Lorcin, 1995). As the colonial project progressed, the idea that ethnicity, culture and religiosity were tied to geographical areas within Algeria developed gradually. Within Maghrebi historiography, these ideas are known as the Kabyle (Algeria) or Berber 'myth' (for the Maghreb as a whole).

Notwithstanding the specificity of the Algerian case, Algeria henceforth became a point of reference for both Morocco and Tunisia. In the latter, the stereotypes existed but were never converted into policy (Lorcin, 1995). In Algeria, policies and legislation would never come to be based on the myth

and upon a separation between Arabs and Berbers, discrediting the former and favoring the latter. However, in Morocco, it did. There, the ethnic divide between Berbers and Arabs existed not only as a discourse but also as a practice. As France's military control over *le Maroc utile* grew, geographical maps took stock of the diverse tribal groups. The latter were, in turn, well documented by so-called *cartes* and *fiches de tribus* that were researched and written by members of an academic committee (Burke, 2007). Such commissions and ethnographers' reports were particularly constitutive of the colonies' epistemic productions and power structures (Stoler, 2009).

This new politics was meant to prevent a repeat of the mistakes made in Algeria where the favoring of Arabic language and Islamic law had resulted in unexpected anti-French nationalist sentiments. The French feared similar developments in Morocco. A rising Moroccan nationalist opposition, unifying 'Arabs' and 'Berbers', would obstruct France's attempts to gain control over Morocco by divide-and-rule tactics. Islam and Arab culture were limited to the *makhzen*, where the central state power was located. Berbers were viewed as the original inhabitants of North Africa, with 'probable' European origins and preserved customs, rituals and superstitions of previous faiths, most notably paganism and Christianity. Their natural distrust of personified power reflected their democratic spirit. In addition, they were said to be monogamous and to treat their women in a more 'European' way than Arabs.

Moreover, the Berbers were thought to be particularly attached to their own customary laws and use of tribal councils, set on preserving their own language, customs and 'traditions'. Arabs and Berbers were thus seen as bounded groups, as incompatible units with clear and strict, even 'natural' boundaries. The French had become ignorant of the diversity of cultures and languages that had marked North African history. As such, ethnography and historiography came to evolve around dichotomous axes, around which there was only room for Berber and Arab culture. This lasted well into the following decades after independence in 1956. One might argue that French colonial history continues to underscore Moroccan and Algerian national historical culture and their respective conceptions of ethnic, cultural and religious identities in particular.

In the long run, the dichotomy created by the French impacted the Berber speaking populations more than the Arab speaking populations (Gross & McMurray, 1993). In the independent Moroccan state, support for the Berber case was seen as support for policies having originated during the French colonial regime. Any sign of so-called *Berberism* was viewed as a 'relic of the colonial past' (Maddy-Weitzman, 2007: 30). The ruling nationalist *Istiqlal* party sought to incorporate the Berbers into one larger Moroccan national identity solely based on Arabism and Islam. Moroccans involved in the urban nationalist movement operated in secret societies. They had been acquainted and familiarized with both European and Arab ideas of nationalism, particularly those that had taken shape in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and other Maghrebi countries through several kinds of media, theater and travels. Sometimes, these elite had even been educated in Egypt. Their ideology was predominantly rooted

in anti-colonial struggles and nationalist currents (Burke, 1972; Segalla, 2009; Wyrtzen, 2011). The concept of 'Moroccanism' solved the Berber-Arab issue. Immediately after independence, fundamental decisions were made and education especially proved a site where national identity was to be reimagined (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011; Segalla, 2009).

The Berbers henceforth obtained an ambiguous position in the Moroccan national narrative inspired by Arabism and Islam, both temporally and spatially. During the process of decolonization, the 'Berber' remained a signifier of 'otherness'. Regarded neither fully as insiders nor as outsiders, the Berbers were represented as the Arabs' distant cousins, thus equally of Arab origin, albeit in a more primitive and indigenous state. The Berbers were to remain 'other' but were also assimilated into the historical destiny of the Arab and Islamic nation (McDougall, 2003, 2006). In 1961, Morocco was officially defined as an Arab and Islamic nation-state and constitutional monarchy. Three years prior, Morocco had become a member of the Arab League. The League co-financed a Rabat-based institution that set out to promote Arabization in the educational system in Morocco (Grandguillaume, 1983; Maddy-Weitzman, 2011).

The dichotomy between Arabs and Berbers was henceforth not erased but rather re-thought and re-worked. In what follows, I will thus look at the Berber myth as a form of cultural memory (Erll, 2008) and more particularly, as a schematic narrative template (Wertsch, 2008a) that reflects a specific, cultural type of producing identities in the contemporary Maghreb that draws on a binary category that was invented during colonial times and continues to underscore identity-making. Wertsch (2008a: 123) views schematic narrative templates as productions of '*(…) replicas that vary in their details but reflect a single general story line. In contrast to specific narratives, these templates do not deal with just one concrete episode from the past.*' In such contexts where ideology is dominantly felt, identities are fragile and memories are easily manipulated. In Moroccan history education, the ideology of the state prevails. It is a form of political memory that serves a political order, that is, that of the Arab and Islamic nation-state.

Modernization and History Education in the Maghreb

The static, fixed and exclusionary interpretation of national identity and the (political) uses of history in national identity construction have been evaluated negatively several times over (Grever, Haydn, & Ribbens, 2008; Grever, Pelzer, & Haydn, 2011; Ribbens, 2007). History may be readily used as a means to make claims in the struggles over national history and identity. Debates on the content of school curricula thus *a priori* exclude the possibility of this fixedness and stability of the interpretation of history that tends to prevail in nationalist discourses. Static and fixed conceptions of national identity can only lead to static and fixed interpretations of the past. How does this work in the context of formerly colonized states? States produce narratives and citizens equally consume them by reproducing and/or contesting them

(Wertsch, 2002). Edward Said (2000: 179) argued that invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) used by states are: '*(…) an instrument of rule in mass societies when the bonds of small social units like village and family were dissolving and authorities needed to find other ways of connecting a large number of people to each other.*'

Ernest Gellner (2006) in particular has stressed that education was crucial for nationalism to succeed as an ideology and in creating and maintaining moral membership of and loyalty to the nation. State institutions play a crucial role in the spread of national ideologies and the creation of a shared culture. In this view, modern state surveillance mechanisms imbue citizens with the importance of the nation-state and its ideology in their daily lives. In Morocco, this entailed downplaying cultural differences between Arabs and Berbers and stressing citizens' shared identity as Moroccans and Muslims. The nation is narrated as a particular and homogenous culture with a particular history and destiny (Breuilly, 2006). Education is a site where narratives of the nation are produced: '*(…) all breathe and speak and produce (…) the* same *culture*' (Gellner, 2006: 3–37). Unlike other forms of memory (i.e. social, cultural), political memory is always *learned* (Assmann, 2006) and has a more prescriptive and compelling nature precisely because it enhances the shaping of *political* identities and not mere cultural or social ones (Assmann, 2011).

During the immediate post-independence years, education in Morocco was significantly and thoroughly reassessed and crafted to produce a Moroccan national identity. France had left Morocco with not just two, but three different school types: French secular primary and secondary schools, primary and professional 'Moroccan' schools instated by the French for the locals, and traditional Islamic schools. In 1956 and 1957, Moroccan policy makers agreed to Arabize and 'Moroccanize' education. The nationalist party *Istiqlal* had driven these debates. They claimed a privileged position in these debates because they had played a pivotal role in the anti-colonial movement. 'Moroccanization' was viewed as a more hands-on solution to the Berber issue.

From 1956 until 1973, schools continued their use of French and Arabic manuals and textbooks. The former arose out of the French secular schools, the latter out of the Arab schools. From 1973 onwards, each subject was to be taught with the help of one manual and one teacher's guide, produced by the Ministry of Education. After 'Moroccanizing' schools and teaching staff, a process of Arabization kicked in. In 1989, the use of Arabic in public education was strengthened. Since 1999, any Moroccan publishing company may submit proposals for manuals, but a committee overseen by the Ministry of Education ratifies and approves them. This measure was meant to introduce plurality in teaching methods but not so much in subject contents. Thus, the basic principle of unification in education has not yet been abandoned. With this specific reform, the Ministry of Education adjusted outdated pedagogies. For instance, instead of relying all too heavily on narrative history, textbooks made more use of visualization and inserted edited historical and archival records, probing for more reasoning in classrooms and 'diminishing' nationalist ideology.

From the early seventies onwards, the school became a place where Moroccan identity was to be shaped. Through education, all citizens—whether they belong to the elite classes or not—are reached (Balibar, 1991). Schools are therefore powerful sites where identities and linguistic communities are shaped. Within the bounds of educational settings, citizens thus learn the myths of the nation. History education in particular promotes views on who belongs to the nation and who does not. Wertsch (2002) especially has argued that nation-states and governments make use of narrative form in order to produce such a coherent story. For Wertsch, narrative form is the instrument through which memory is distributed. Memory cannot survive without a medium, and states turn to texts when they need to control and direct collective memories. History textbooks reflect the views of the state, not necessarily those of the citizens of the state. The content of history textbooks, the rules of production and their distribution reveal state views on history and state ideology. They are produced and distributed under national constraints (De Baets, 2002). Textbooks used in Moroccan schools were, for example, initially produced in Egypt because Morocco had become a member of the Arab League. The Egyptian Ministry of Education thus initially produced textbooks used in the Maghreb. This only changed in the early seventies. From then onwards, textbooks were produced in the capital, Rabat.

In general, national history textbooks in Morocco and Algeria have paid little attention to the Berbers. The politics of historical priority (Zerubavel, 2003), wherein individuals and groups may want to claim a deeper history, a homeland or an 'ancient' lineage says a lot about how they (want to) position themselves in the present, how they construct and present their 'identity'. It creates not only a sense of belonging and one's place in the world but it also produces a particular claim to autochthony and indigenousness, that is, the roots of national identity. In Morocco, this consisted of countering the narrative on the Berber identity of the Maghreb on the one hand and dismissing the 'primitive' status the Arabs and Muslims were accorded during colonial times on the other. One might argue that after independence, local discourse on Moroccan identity was colonized once again by an Arabism that ignored Morocco's regional and local specificity.

Arabs and Berbers in History Textbooks

Over the course of four decades, the content of Moroccan history textbooks has barely changed, leaving room for only minor adaptations and adjustments to the textbooks' contents, such as *errata*. The basic narrative template within each textbook has thus remained unaltered. The narrative in national history textbooks located the Berbers' origins in the Middle East and hence accorded Arab origins to the Berbers, albeit in a more primitive state. The Berber did not disappear after the end of colonization; it rather remained a signifier in the state's nationalism-in-reverse (Silverstein, 2002). Historical narratives were adjusted to meet the needs of national unity and identity. After independence,

historians could not erase the Berbers. The French view on Arab-Berber relations had been propagated in schools and among the urban and rural elites. It was a matter of incorporating and interpreting the presence of the Berbers in such a way that a Berber past would not be problematic: the Berbers were to remain 'other' and non-Arab, but at the same time they had to be incorporated into an Islamic and Arab nation. The Berber had to be assimilated into the historical destiny of an Arab and Islamic nation (McDougall, 2003, 2006).

Therefore, national historians underlined the Canaanite origins of the Berbers, providing them with a distinct genealogy that linked them to the Arabs as their distant 'cousins' (McDougall, 2003: 72). Ibn Khaldun had located the Berbers' origins in Mesopotamia. Some French ethnologists, not all, had supported this thesis. Historians thus struck a balance between relatedness with Arabs on the one hand and indigenousness on the other, albeit in a very distant, obscure past. The first Berber is Arab-Islamic historiography's true 'noble savage' (McDougall, 2003: 75). Maghrebi historiography thus inverted the French discourse on civilization and replaced 'the French' with 'Arabs'. There had been Arab-Berber unity all along. Islam was an important turning point in national history. Islam salvaged and perfected both ethnic groups.

A narrative of the 'mixing' of races lies at the basis of Moroccan national identity and civilization. In Algeria, colonial politics of assimilation had resulted in a reconceptualization of the West and the 'Algerian' national spirit was now thought of as fundamentally different from Europe. Uniting Berbers and Arabs under the umbrella of 'Islam' did, however, not mark the beginning of history; in Algeria, according to McDougall (2006), it rather signified its end. This set out the principles and terms under which one could interpret what would *follow* after the unification established by the coming of Islam. In fact, in Maghrebi national historiographies, there is little change after the establishment and rooting of Islam: there are only outside threats, seen as violence against the nation and as 'civilizational' violence. Colonialism is regarded as such a form of violence. Islam acts as a binding factor of the new 'mixed race', from which it also gathers its strength as a nation.

According to this Arab-Islamic master narrative, indeed, history ends with the arrival of Islam. Therefore the Berbers are accorded a negligible role in history and are hence cast and caught in a time before Islam, before civilization and before history. Not surprisingly, it is this specific dimension of time in the narrative construction of Berber identity which has been most contested by political opposition in the Maghreb. National histories tend to stress the common origins of the members of the national community, imbuing history with uniqueness and community with destiny. This uniqueness might be obtained through stories stressing the nation's ethnicity and religion. In so doing, national histories are always excluding others (Lorenz, 2010).

National identity is equally consistent in that it undergoes change (Lorenz, 2011; see also Ricoeur, 1992). National narratives on the Berbers' pres-

ence were thus plotted as linear, progressive stories and secularized versions of historical destinies (Lorenz, 2011). As an ethnic minority in independent Morocco and Algeria, Berbers were simultaneously rendered as 'other' because they were different from the Arabs. At the same time, they were conveyed as being part of the Arab and Islamic nation, minimalizing their cultural difference. There had been no substantial historical break with the coming of the Arabs and Islam, as the Berbers had originated from the very same region. Islam was seen as a uniting factor in national histories. Moreover, the idea of progress of history is linked to the Islamic 'awakening' and integrity of the national territory.

In *My lessons in history,* a Moroccan history textbook that has been used from the early eighties onwards in primary education, the origins of the Berbers in Morocco is treated. The subject of history in primary schools was taught in Arabic, not French. In the third chapter, *The ancient populations of Morocco and their contact with Mediterranean peoples,* Moroccan children are introduced to the Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals and Byzantines. A fourth chapter discusses the advent of Islam in Morocco and the 'Islamic opening' in *Al-Andalus.* Afterwards, chapters are built around dynastic successions: the foundation of the Idrissid dynasty and the creation of the Moroccan nation-state by Idris II. Then, the relations between Morocco and Europe during the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution in Europe and colonial empires and 'the Moroccan crisis' during the First and Second World Wars, are treated thematically. Particular attention is paid to the exile of Mohammed V and Moroccan independence. The textbook's last chapters discuss the kingship of Hassan II.

The third chapter thus summarizes the presence of ancient 'peoples' in the Maghreb and devotes equal attention to each population, forming an 'ethnic map' of Morocco. The narrative (compare McDougall, 2003) balances between primordiality and hybridity. The Maghreb is considered as a 'mixed' region, which is nevertheless comprised of an original substratum that can justify the nation's Arab-Islamic identity: all of these 'peoples', including the Berbers, originated in the Middle East. Young Moroccan citizens were hence taught that the first peoples inhabiting Morocco originated from the Arab peninsula, from Yemen in particular, allegedly fleeing from the war with the Canaanites.

These distinct groups interacted with each other and thus created the *Barbar*, the Barbarians (compare Maddy-Weitzman, 2011). The Berbers called themselves *Amazigh* in their Berber language, meaning 'free people'. The word 'Barbar', the author of the textbook *My lessons in history* explains, was used by Romans to name these groups. According to the Arabs that would come to North Africa, he further explains, the name meant 'sons of Barbar'. The Berbers were not treated as one group in the textbook but as several smaller groups. The author distinguished between sedentary and nomadic Berbers. The first practiced agriculture, the second did not and lived off their cattle.

Furthermore, the book asserts that the Berbers are to be divided in three dialect groups: Tashelhyit-, Tamazight- and Tarifit-speaking Berbers. These dialects are 'unintelligible', the book asserts, because they are based heavily on the sounds 'b' and 'r'. All three dialect groups are perceived as 'Barbar'. The Berbers are represented as 'simple' people who are very much dependent on their own 'traditional' techniques and lifestyles. Within these groups, there are tribes headed by a *sjeikh* who unites them in times of war. The textbook notes that the Berbers are 'equally courageous and noble' in times of war. It is stressed that they are 'good people, just like the Arabs'. Their psychical appearance is depicted and detailed; the textbook then focuses on their pagan religion. Tapestry and tajines are considered 'typical Berber handicrafts and products'.

The narrative on the Berbers' origins is followed by the story that the Romans colonized Africa. However, they were unable to penetrate into the mountainous areas. The Romans had a racist attitude and they focused on the economic development of the Maghreb. Christian and Jewish beliefs were propagated among the local populations, but—so the book states—traditional beliefs survived. From then on, the book directs attention to the Arabs and no longer to 'Berbers' or 'local populations'. When the book details the coming of the Vandals and the Byzantine Empire, we find a story about '*the Kahina who goes by the name of Dahia*', a woman who was at war against the Arabs. The latter destroyed those who were against Islam, the Berbers. The Berbers, the book tells us, were the ones who had previously obstructed foreigners from colonizing 'the ancient Berber lands'. Hassan murdered the Kahina in 82 *hijra* (year-numbering system of the Islamic calendar starting in 622 CE, according to which 82 hijra corresponds with 701 CE). After the defeat of the Kahina, the author stresses the Berbers' initial resistance against converting to Islam. However, after they had converted, they propagated Islam with ferocity. This culminates in the historical justification and narrative on *Al-Andalus* and the armies led by Tarik Ibn Zyad. The textbook's antagonists in this particular chapter are the Romans, Vandals and Byzantines but not the Berbers. We read how the Berbers were acknowledged for defending their territory and the safeguarding of its integrity against foreign invaders. While the difference between Berbers and Arabs is maintained, it is also toned down. They are united as Muslims.

According to James Wertsch (2002, 2008a, 2008b), narratives are the *cultural tools* that we apply to remember. He argues that, in order to be able to remember, we must story the 'memory matter'. Memory matters as such are not storied. This often happens *dialogically*. Such narrating relies on the application of templates and formats. In the case of the origins of the Berbers, stories were dialectically narrated through the categories of Arab Muslims and Berbers. In the official narrative, the coming of Islam and Arabs signals a moral evaluative point and the definition of what it meant to belong to the nation and to be a Moroccan citizen.

Activism and Contemporary Challenges

Since the late nineties, Moroccan social movements have contested this view on Moroccan national identity and interpretation of history. Protest has mostly been organized by Berber cultural activists who aim to revive Berber identity and culture in Maghreb countries and the Maghrebi diaspora. Mohammed Chafik, a prominent historian within the Berber Movement and former director of the Royal Institute for Amazigh (Berber) Culture, and other historians and activists along with him, have not ceased to emphasize the need for the 'decolonization' of Moroccan national history. The 'other' (e.g. Roman, French, Arab) had perpetually written *their* history. In his *A Brief Survey of Thirty-Three Centuries of Amazigh History,* published by the Royal Institute in 2005 in a new edition, Chafik appealed to an international audience and claimed that the stakes of memory, in the identity formation of Morocco and among Moroccan communities abroad, were high. Chafik proposed a re-reading of North African history in which the Berbers were accorded agency. Denying the very authenticity of these countries would mean that North African nation-states were denying the existence of the majority of their citizens and those citizens living abroad.

In contemporary history and social sciences textbooks (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011), the narrative on the Berbers' origins has been changed. The Berbers are no longer referred to as *Barbar* but solely as *Imazighen*, as 'free people'. A narrative that grants them indigenousness replaces the story of the Arab origins of the Berbers. Consequently, the Berbers are granted historical priority over the Arabs in North Africa. The Maghreb is nowadays called *bilad al-Amazigh*—the land of the Berber. Contrary to the representation of Berber societies in the history textbooks used before, the Berbers are accorded other values than those related to honor because they defended Morocco and North Africa in general against foreign 'invaders'. The Berbers' resistance against 'colonizing' others throughout the region's history is underscored and at the same time completed with notions such as democracy and solidarity. These values are conveyed through certain heroes that have traditionally underscored the Berber cultural and social movement's counter-narratives, for instance, *Amazigh* kings such as Masinissa, Jugurtha and Juba, military leader Takfarinas. These are all said to have acted against foreign Roman rule in order to preserve Berber culture and territorial integrity. Antiquity belongs to the Berbers. But once the arrival of Islam is noted, the Berbers were pushed out of view as historical agents in the narrative although the Berber origins of the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties are noted. From the Islamic 'awakening' onwards, religion unites and ethnicity is erased.

The narrative also selectively 'forgets' episodes of internal religious strife, as these could be interpreted as ethnic divisions within a religious community of Muslims. Whereas the Berbers are granted historical priority, with origins located inside the Maghreb and not on the Arab Peninsula, the binary categories of Arabs and Berbers have up to this day not been erased but rather

retained. By rewriting the narrative on the Berbers' origins, by claiming historical priority and indigenousness, Moroccan citizens remain dependent on the canon of French ethnologists, geographers and historians as it was crystallized in the French *mythe berbère*. Hence, the 'schematic narrative template' (Wertsch, 2002) dialogically shapes the binary thinking in national narratives, the myths of the nation and the counter-memories of those who shape and contest them. Individuals and communities create a sense of belonging and construct their identity by imbuing the past with meaning in the act of narrating about it. Despite globalization, processes of migration and the so-called waning relevance of nation-states and the de-territorialization of identities, the national—as a frame of remembrance and reference—remains an important marker of identity.

Conclusion

States may turn to texts when they need to control and direct the collective memories of their subjects. As argued throughout this chapter, standardized education and history education in particular are often used as means to create and sustain national identities and produce a sense of belonging. Nation-states and governments make use of narrative form in order to produce a coherent story (Wertsch, 2002). This chapter looked into the narrative templates that were produced during the process of decolonization and modernization in the Maghreb from 1956 onwards and the ways in which they relied on knowledge produced earlier on during the colonial era. It did so by looking at the re-invention of the ethnic and cultural differences between Arabs and Berbers and the production of a national historical narrative in the newly independent, decolonizing Moroccan nation-state. After independence in 1956, the Moroccan nationalist movement and monarchy proposed and imposed a national identity that was both Arab and Muslim but failed to incorporate Berber identity because this aspect of Moroccan cultural and social relations had become too closely associated with the colonizer's legacy, more specifically its policy of 'divide and rule'. The colonizing states of the nineteenth century are known to have stressed internal cultural and ethnic differences in the colonies in order to facilitate their political project. If not erased, differences between Arabs and Berbers were minimalized in order to unify the Moroccans after independence. The Arab-Berber distinction functions as a narrative template that had once been imagined by the French and which was re-mediated after independence. Identity always needs an 'other' (Ricoeur, 1992). Perhaps cultural memory has not been fully decolonized in the Maghreb countries.

It becomes clear that what is needed in processes of decolonization and modernization in history education consists not so much of an authentic but rather a useable past. In decolonized states in general, categories of identity often relate back to past colonial politics of identity making. In this respect, research into the ways in which various forms of colonial rule continue to impact identity making in such decolonized states has become a pressing mat-

ter. Throughout the past five decades, the national narrative of Morocco and the Berbers' status in particular have undergone significant changes. Social and cultural activism, often supported by the diaspora, has pressured the Moroccan national government and royal house into democratizing state institutions such as education and into reconsidering its historical imagination as a nation-state, including the country's Jewish and Berber heritage (Ben-Layashi & Maddy-Weitzman, 2010). Yet as 'an eternal other', so tightly linked to the historical process of colonization and the anti-colonial Arab nationalist answer it brought forth, the cultural and ethnic identity of 'the Berber' remains in need of re-invention. Perhaps the answer to the decolonization of national narratives in the postcolonial Maghreb lies not in its contents, but in its method. Most of all, the place of the Berbers in the national historical narratives in the Maghreb is in need of deconstruction.

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